

If you look simply at line 5 of Schedule A, you see where people who pay income taxes to their State can deduct that, and you will see there is no line for Washington State taxpayers or taxpayers in similar States to deduct their sales tax.

This is not a complicated bill. It is a very simple bill, it is a fair bill and I would urge my colleagues to support it. We have an obligation to treat citizens fairly at the Federal level. That is why I am here, to fight for simple fairness.

This is the second time I have stood here in this well in less than a month to sponsor legislation that will protect our citizens from being subjected to unfair taxation. I will come back to the well of this House again and again until we achieve that standard.

I hope that my colleagues will see the wisdom of this fair proposal and that we can take swift action to restore this common-sense option. I invite them to join me in this effort for the simple reason that it is the right thing to do.

ON NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon out of concern for the State of America's national security. I do not want to speak directly to the ongoing operations in Kosovo today, although I am deeply troubled by the enormous uncertainties that seem to be the consequence of a poorly planned policy. Instead, I want to address the consequences of Kosovo on the U.S. military presence worldwide. I believe we are facing a period of unacceptable risk.

Our armed forces are spread across the globe, from South Korea to Latin America. We are engaged in areas that are clearly essential to American security and in areas that are clearly tangential to our security. We are engaged in what are essentially two air wars on two continents at the same time to which we are asking combat engineers to devote themselves to building roads and bridges. We are deterring invasion and we are garrisoning in support of peace agreements.

What we must consider is whether we are doing too much and we spread too thin. Historically we have been warned of the dangers of "imperial overstretch." Unfortunately, I have fears that we are reaching such a point today. I do not want to call for retrenchment or retreat, but we must ask if we have gone too far and if we have asked too much of the armed forces. If we have, it is the job of Congress and the administration to work together to identify solutions.

In 1997, the Quadrennial Defense Review reaffirmed the requirement that the U.S. must be prepared to fight two nearly simultaneously major theater wars while also staying ready for lesser contingencies. I have argued in Congress that the available funding for the Department of Defense has been inadequate to meet those requirements.

When the United States fought the 1991 Persian Gulf War, we had about 3.2 million soldiers in the active and reserve components. Ten years later, today, we have 900,000 fewer men and women in uniform.

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The Army, which has been tasked with the responsibility of maintaining the majority of our overseas presence, has seen its active duty end strength fall by some 40 percent since 1991. Today we maintain as a matter of national strategy 100,000 troops in Asia and another 100,000 troops in Europe. We now have more than 20,000 personnel actively engaged in Operation Allied Force, and nearly 40,000 personnel are engaged in an astonishing 20 other operations around the world today, and the situation today varies only slightly from the breakpoint operational pace since the Persian Gulf War. A recent Congressional Research Service report counts 28 different contingency operations from 1991 until now at a cost of nearly \$18 billion. The President has committed our resources to these operations.

The Air Mobility Command Base in my hometown of Spokane at Fairchild is an example of this extraordinary intensive operational tempo. Fairchild is kept very busy supporting KC-135 aerial refueling tankers from 16 different locations around the world. Ninety-seven percent of the total crew force from the 92nd Airlift Wing is deployed today.

We are trying to maintain this level of international presence with increasingly ancient equipment. The KC-135's based at Fairchild have an average age of 37 years. There is no planning for replacement largely because there are no funds available. The B-52s, which were also once based at Fairchild, are slightly older, yet the Air Force intends to keep them in the inventory until 2040. No replacement is in sight, another victim of dramatically smaller defense budgets. Despite the intensive operational pace, defense spending has fallen 30 percent from Fiscal Year 1991 levels and 40 percent from Fiscal Year 1985 levels.

As we overcommit our forces to tangential operations around the globe, the risk increases. Troops deployed in Haiti cannot immediately support missions in Korea, and troops trained to keep the peace in Bosnia are not combat ready if they are called upon to defend Kuwait.

A rubber band can only be stretched so far before it breaks, and I fear we are nearing that point. Mr. Milosevic called the Clinton administration's bluff in Kosovo, and 3 weeks ago American forces were pitched into a war we had not planned for and lacked the resources to immediately support. What would formerly have been considered a lesser contingency has now tied down a significant number of our conventional combat power.

General Clark's recent request for reinforcements is for a total of 800 planes in the region, tying up nearly seven combat air wings out of a total of 20 in Europe. Our most important assets are

committed. We have heavily taxed our available airlift. It is all tied up with supporting our forces and the refugees in Kosovo. There is no carrier battle group providing coverage in Northeast Asia because of the need to support the Balkan mission. We have nearly expended all available air launched cruise missiles, and both the Air Force and the Navy have submitted emergency requests to replenish depleted stores.

Now it looks like the President is going to be calling up the Reserves to support this mission, the first call-up since the Persian Gulf War. Can we sustain this pace? It is very questionable. We must fund it if we are going to sustain it.

The services have presented the National Security Appropriations Subcommittee a list of unfunded requirements that amounts to over \$7 million a year, and these funds are needed just to meet the military's most critical needs, not considering any of the shortfalls that have emerged in the last few weeks. This is a serious situation and supplemental funding should include not just the costs of the operation, but also the critical funds that the military needs to step back from the brink to which it has been pushed. We must reverse continued deterioration of our Armed Forces.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES GROUP LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, the provision of long-term care insurance coverage to Federal employees is an important priority for me as ranking member of the Subcommittee on Civil Service. On January 6, I introduced H.R. 110, the Federal Employees Group Long-Term Care Insurance Act of 1999. My bill is one of four elements of the comprehensive long-term care package proposed earlier this year by President Clinton.

H.R. 110 would authorize the Office of Personnel Management to purchase a policy or policies from one or more qualified private sector contractors to make long-term care insurance available to Federal employees, retirees and eligible family members at group rates. Coverage would be paid for entirely by those who elect it.

The Clinton administration and I support modifying H.R. 110 to extend long-term care coverage to employees of the United States Postal Service, active duty military personnel, military retirees and their families. I believe that extending coverage to Postal employees and military personnel would make the risk larger and more diverse and would help keep costs down.

All participants other than active employees and active duty military personnel would be fully underwritten, as is standard practice with products of this kind. Coverage made available to individuals would be guaranteed renewable and could not be canceled except

for nonpayment of premiums. Though each participant would be responsible for paying the full amount of their premiums based on age at time of enrollment, group rates will save an estimated 15 to 20 percent off the costs of individual long-term insurance care policies.

OPM will be responsible for the administrative costs of the program, which is estimated to be only \$15 million over a 5-year period. This would include developing and implementing a program to educate employees about long-term care insurance. Extending OPM's market efforts to postal employees, active duty military personnel and retirees would, however, increase first year administrative costs above what is included in this estimate.

To date, the Subcommittee on Civil Service has held three hearings on offering long-term care insurance as a benefit option for Federal employees. We have heard the testimony of people who have had to bear the tremendous costs of providing long-term care for a loved one. We have heard testimony from the Office of Personnel Management on long-term care insurance carriers, about the best approach for implementing a long-term care program for Federal employees.

At the subcommittee's most recent hearing in Jacksonville, Florida, which was held just a week ago, I heard from witnesses who testified how important it is for Americans to invest in long-term care insurance, particularly women. A study last week found that women are more vulnerable to the financial and emotional strains associated with long-term care. Women live longer, generally earn less than men, save less for their retirement, receive lower Social Security payments, and are often caregivers when a family member becomes ill or infirm.

The American Health Care Association commissioned a national telephone survey of 800 adult Americans between the ages of 34 and 52 years of age, baby boomers, in September of 1998. As it pertains to women, the study found the following:

Among baby boomers, men save on the average of one-third more than women save for their retirement. More than one-third of all boomer women expect to be a caregiver for a family member. Female boomer caregivers are almost twice as likely to expect to provide care for a parent or in-law as they are to provide it for their husband. Half of the women in the study said that they had to reduce the number of hours they worked and give up space in their homes to provide this care. In addition, sizeable percentages said that they had to hire nursing help, incur large expenses, and quit their jobs or take a leave of absence as a result of their caregiving responsibilities.

More than 7 in 10 female boomers say that they are concerned about saving enough for retirement, while nearly two-thirds say they are concerned about saving enough to pay for long-

term care. Finally, 58 percent of boomers support the idea of offering quality long-term care insurance to Federal employees to set a national example to encourage businesses to offer this benefit to their employees.

I believe that H.R. 110 will help to raise the general public's awareness of the need for long-term care insurance and underscore the limitations associated with the reliance on Medicaid for one's long-term care needs.

SENDING GROUND TROOPS TO KOSOVO WOULD COMPOUND A HUGE FOREIGN POLICY ERROR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, last night on the CNN national news the anchor woman said that Congress did not question the costs of the Kosovo-Serbia bombings, implying total support. That very morning, however, the Congressional Quarterly had a headline that said, "Congress Eyes Cost of U.S. Role in Kosovo."

There probably is no question that this money will be approved. However, it is simply wrong to imply that no Members of Congress question these costs.

We are now being told that we will soon be asked to approve \$4 billion for the costs of our air war. One estimate is that ground troops and reconstruction costs could soon total \$10 billion. This is money that will have to be taken from other programs and from American taxpayers, and if we have to stay in there to preserve the peace for many years to come, the costs could just become unbelievable. Many Members of Congress feel it was a horrible mistake to get into this mess in the first place and that our bombings have made a bad situation many times worse than if we had simply offered humanitarian aid.

CNN and much of our liberal national media may want a much bigger role. The American people want out of there, the sooner the better.

Yesterday a Democratic Member of the House sat down next to me and said, "I don't know who these people are polling. Everyone in my district is strongly opposed to this war."

In just the past couple of days, Mr. Speaker, I have had similar comments made to me from both Democratic and Republican Members of the House from Missouri, Virginia, New York, Kentucky, Arizona, Maryland, Alabama, California, North Carolina and Florida. I have not been seeking these comments. I have been taking no formal survey. But Members of the House have been telling me that their constituents are almost totally opposed to this war in Serbia and Kosovo.

Our colleague, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) was on the C-Span Washington Journal yesterday morning. He said he had had over 1,000 peo-

ple in town meetings over the recess and that when he asked how many favored ground troops in Kosovo, only 10 people raised their hands.

Last Thursday morning this same question was asked on the leading talk radio show in Knoxville. Only one call came in in favor of ground troops, yet the national media has this drumbeat going for a bigger, longer, more expensive war. Heaven help us if part of this is about ratings, or so some of our leaders can prove how powerful they are, or to leave some great legacy as world statesman.

I believe this is going to go down as one of the great miscalculations in American history and certainly one of the most expensive. We have turned NATO from a purely defensive organization into an aggressor force for the first time in history, and one that has attacked a sovereign nation for the first time in history.

With our bombings in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Sudan and now Serbia and Kosovo, we are bombing nations which have not threatened us in any way, which have not jeopardized our national security and where we have no vital U.S. interests, and we are quickly turning people who would like to be our friends into bitter enemies of the United States. We have taken a bad situation and made it many times worse by our bombings and have created a huge refugee crisis in the process, and all of this was done by the President apparently against the advice of his top military advisers and against the advice of the head of the CIA.

The Christian Science Monitor, the National Journal and many other leading publications and columnists have pointed out that there are at least 30 or 40 other conflicts, small wars, going on all over this world right now, several far worse than Kosovo before we started bombing. Our policy should have been, Mr. Speaker, and should be now: humanitarian aid, yes; bombings and ground troops, no.

The U.S. was doing 68 percent of the bombing before General Clark requested 300 more planes. If the majority in Congress wants to send ground troops in and, I think, ignore their constituents in the process, then let the Europeans lead for once. We do not have to carry the entire burden. Those who wanted to expand NATO membership a few months ago to bring in Poland and Czechoslovakia and Hungary should call on those countries to supply troops. They have done nothing so far, and it is obvious that NATO would not be doing all of this or any of this were it not for U.S. insistence.

One of our leading columnists, Mr. Speaker, wrote a couple of days ago these words:

"Three weeks into Bill Clinton's Balkan adventure, and America risks a debacle. The human rights crisis in Kosovo has exploded into a catastrophe. Slobodan Milosevic is being rallied around like some Serbian Churchill, Montenegro and Macedonia